



[Home](#) › [Statistics](#) › [Labour](#) › [Earnings and working conditions](#) › [Industrial Disputes, Australia](#) › March 2023

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Industrial Disputes, Australia

The number of disputes (strikes or lockouts), employees involved and working days lost; cause of dispute; duration; and the reason work resumed

Reference period March 2023

Released 8/06/2023

On this page

[Key statistics](#)

[Overview](#)

[Long-term trends](#)

[Industry](#)

[States and territories](#)

[Cause of dispute](#)

[Working days lost](#)

[Reason work resumed](#)

[Data downloads](#)

[Methodology](#)

Key statistics

In the March quarter 2023:

- 41 disputes occurred.
- 4,700 employees were involved and 7,700 working days lost.
- disputes occurred in 7 industries and in 8 states and territories.

During the year ended March 2023, there were 198 disputes and a total of 184,900 working days lost.

	Quarter	Year ended		
	December Quarter 2022	March Quarter 2023	March Quarter 2022	March Quarter 2023
Number of disputes (no.)				
New	r53	33	128	191
Total	r68	41	134	198
Employees involved ('000)				
New	r18.4	4.1	78.4	115.0
Total	r21.6	4.7	78.9	117.4
Working days lost ('000)	r21.0	7.7	117.0	184.9

r revised

Revisions

Minor revisions have been made to the December quarter 2022 data as a result of new information received from organisations. These revisions are reflected in both the tables of this publication and the associated time series spreadsheets.

Overview

In the March quarter 2023, there were:

- 41 disputes, 27 less than the previous quarter.
- 4,700 employees involved, a decrease from 21,600 the previous quarter.
- 7,700 working days lost, a decrease from 21,000 in the previous quarter.

Year ended estimates:

- 198 disputes occurred, 64 more than in the previous year.
- 184,900 working days were lost, 67,900 more than in the previous year.

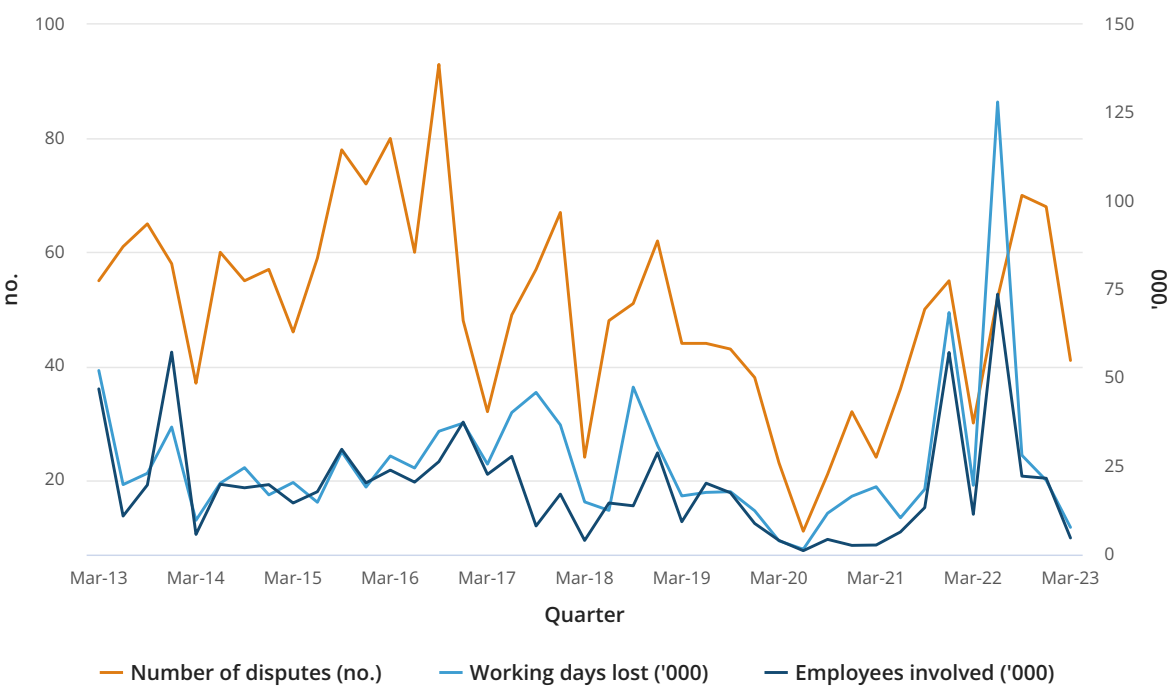
	Number of disputes		Employees involved		Working days lost
	New (no.)	Total (no.)	New ('000)	Total ('000)	('000)
March Quarter 2021	22	24	2.3	2.7	19.2
June Quarter 2021	30	36	6.0	6.4	10.4
September Quarter 2021	39	50	11.7	13.3	18.5
December Quarter 2021	37	55	50.6	57.2	68.5
March Quarter 2022	22	30	10.1	11.4	19.6
June Quarter 2022	45	52	71.2	73.7	128.1
September Quarter 2022	60	70	21.2	22.2	28.1
December Quarter 2022	r53	r68	r18.4	r21.6	r21.0
March Quarter 2023	33	41	4.1	4.7	7.7

r revised

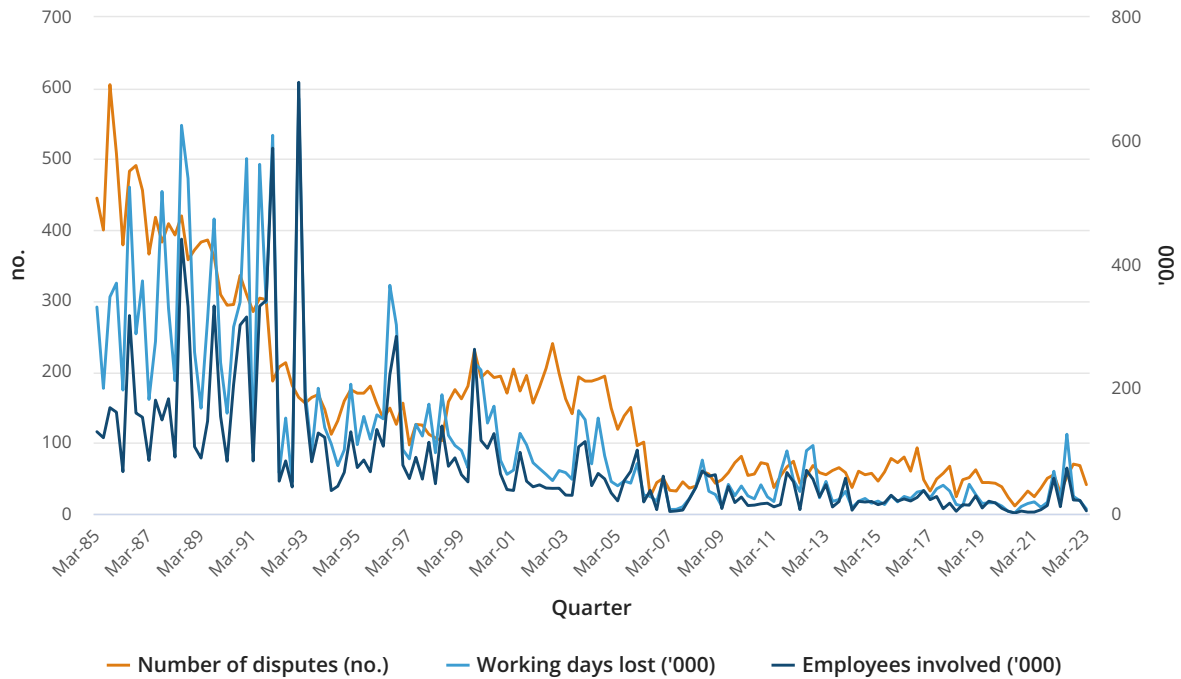
Long-term trends

The level of industrial disputation over recent years is considerably lower than in the 1980's and prior decades.

Industrial disputes in the last 10 years, Australia



Industrial disputes historical series, Australia



Industry

In the March quarter, disputes occurred in seven industries. Almost a third (28%) of the total working days lost were in the Manufacturing: Metal product etc industry.

Industrial disputes which occurred during the quarter, industry

	December Quarter 2022		March Quarter 2023	
	Working days lost	Working days lost per thousand employees	Working days lost	Working days lost per thousand employees
	('000)	(*)(no.)	('000)	(no.)
Mining				
Coal mining	0.1	1.3	-	-
Other mining	np	np	np	np
Manufacturing				
Metal product etc (a)	np	np	2.2	6.6
Other manufacturing	6.2	12.1	0.3	0.6
Construction	2.5	2.3	1.7	1.6
Transport, postal & warehousing	0.9	1.4	1.0	1.6
Education & training; Health care & social assistance	8.6	2.8	1.3	0.4
Other industries (a)	r2.1	0.3	np	np
All industries	r21.0	1.7	7.7	0.6

r revised

- nil or rounded to zero (including null cells)

np not available for publication but included in totals where applicable, unless otherwise indicated

(a) see Glossary - [Industry \(/methodologies/industrial-disputes-australia-methodology/dec-2022#glossary\)](#) - for details of industries included

(*) Working days lost per thousand employees series has been revised

States and territories

Disputes occurred in eight states and territories in the March quarter, with nearly a third (32%) of the total working days lost occurring in New South Wales.

Industrial disputes which occurred during the quarter, states and territories

	December Quarter 2022		March Quarter 2023	
	Working days lost	Working days lost per thousand employees	Working days lost	Working days lost per thousand employees
	('000)	(*)(no.)	('000)	(no.)
New South Wales	r6.4	1.6	2.5	0.6
Victoria	r5.1	1.6	2.2	0.7
Queensland	2.8	1.1	1.6	0.6
South Australia	0.8	1.0	0.6	0.8
Western Australia	3.2	2.3	0.8	0.6
Tasmania	2.0	7.5	-	-
Northern Territory	0.5	3.7	-	-
Australian Capital Territory	r0.2	r0.9	-	-
Australia	r21.0	1.7	7.7	0.6

r revised

- nil or rounded to zero (including null cells)

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Cause of dispute

Most industrial disputes are Enterprise Bargaining (EB) related. Over the past 10 years, disputes over employment conditions have generally been the most prevalent.

EB related issues were the cause of 95% of disputes (57 of 60) which ended in the December quarter 2022.

	September Quarter 2022			December Quarter 2022		
	Number of disputes (no.)	Employees involved ('000)	Working days lost ('000)	Number of disputes (no.)	Employees involved ('000)	Working days lost ('000)
Enterprise Bargaining related						
Remuneration	17	3.8	10.1	17	1.6	2.8
Employment conditions	31	6.4	15.1	37	23.2	20.2
Other	1	np	np	3	0.5	0.2
Non-Enterprise Bargaining related						
Remuneration	-	-	-	-	-	-
Employment conditions	1	np	np	1	-	0.1
Health and safety	1	np	np	-	-	-
Job security	-	-	-	-	-	-
Managerial policy	3	48.1	92.0	1	0.4	0.5
Union issues	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other	1	np	np	1	1.0	0.6
Total	55	59.2	118.2	60	26.7	24.4

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Working days lost

Working days lost is a measure of the length of a dispute, relative to the number of employees involved.

Of the 60 disputes which ended in the December quarter, 22 lasted up to and including 1 day. These disputes had:

- 22,700 employees involved; and
- 11,300 working days lost.

Working days lost for disputes which ended during the quarter

	September Quarter 2022			December Quarter 2022		
	Number of disputes (no.)	Employees involved ('000)	Working days lost ('000)	Number of disputes (no.)	Employees involved ('000)	Working days lost ('000)
Up to and including 1 day	21	5.8	4.9	22	22.7	11.3
Over 1 day and up to including 2 days	13	50.9	95.4	13	1.5	2.1
Over 2 and less than 5 days	10	np	np	15	2.1	6.9
5 and less than 10 days	9	1.1	9.6	7	0.2	1.6
10 days and over	2	np	np	3	0.1	2.5
Total	55	59.2	118.2	60	26.7	24.4

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Reason work resumed

The reason work resumed relates to the last day of action taken. Resumption of work can occur without resolution to the issues that triggered the dispute.

There was a pre-determined return to work for 82% of disputes (49 of 60) which ended in the December quarter 2022.

Reason work resumed for disputes which ended during the quarter

	September Quarter 2022			December Quarter 2022		
	Number of disputes (no.)	Employees involved ('000)	Working days lost ('000)	Number of disputes (no.)	Employees involved ('000)	Working days lost ('000)
Negotiation without intervention of a third party	2	np	np	6	1.5	6.8
State legislation	-	-	-	-	-	-
Federal legislation	1	np	np	2	0.1	0.2
Pre-determined return to work	49	58.2	116.5	49	23.8	16.0
Resumption without negotiation	2	0.7	0.8	3	1.4	1.4
Mediation	1	-	-	-	-	-
Other reasons	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	55	59.2	118.2	60	26.7	24.4

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Data downloads

Time Series Spreadsheets

⬇ Download all (479.81 KB)

Table 1: Industrial disputes which occurred during the period

⬇ [Download XLSX](#)

[58.6 KB]

Table 2a: Industrial disputes which occurred during the period, working days lost, industry

[↓ Download XLSX](#)
[53.7 KB]

Table 2b: Industrial disputes which occurred during the period, working days lost per thousand employees, industry

[↓ Download XLSX](#)
[53.33 KB]

Table 3a: Industrial disputes which occurred during the period, working days lost, states and territories

[↓ Download XLSX](#)
[62.91 KB]

Table 3b: Industrial disputes which occurred during the period, working days lost per thousand employees, states and territories

[↓ Download XLSX](#)
[61.55 KB]

Table 4a: Industrial disputes which ended during the period, cause of dispute

[↓ Download XLSX](#)
[91.03 KB]

Table 4b: Industrial disputes which ended during the period, working days lost per employee involved

[↓ Download XLSX](#)
[62.79 KB]

Table 4c: Industrial disputes which ended during the period, reason work resumed

[↓ Download XLSX](#)
[77.71 KB]

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Methodology

